582 The earliest age recorded for married males
585 is 14, this age group comprising 0.7 percent of the total male marriages. However, there is reason to believe that the age of males is falsified at marriage more than that of females. Most marriages, according to the statistics, take place at 16 or after; 8 percent of males marry at the age of 16. Five percent were married at 17, 21 percent at 18, 8 percent at 19, and 10 percent at 20. None were married at age 24, but 6 percent were married at 25. Some marriages listed at this age are probably remarriages, and certainly few first marriages take place after 25. The emphasis placed upon marriage as a normal state is indicated by the considerable age of some persons married. Two women and two men are shown as married at 60, while one man is shown as married at 80 and another at 82.

No particular season of marriage preference is evident if marriage frequencies are analyzed by months, despite assertions that most marriages take place in the winter after harvest. Evidently marriages take place when people have resources, regardless of the time of year. The fluctuations from year to year probably could be accounted for in terms of variable economic conditions. It must be remembered that the month of marriage reported is the time of the civil registry and church wedding. Probably the majority of marriages are consummated before these events.

In addition to the statistical data, even earlier marriages are believed to take place. One girl, whose age was alleged by several people independently to be only 15, had four children. Gossip told of another case of a girl of 10 years who was "half married," that is, the groom's parents did not yet permit him to sleep with his wife. But at the age of 14 the girl was said to have had two children. Before the Tarascans are censured for the practice of such early marriages, it should be born in mind that Bishop Quiroga, who had so much influence on the Tarascans, in his ordinances authorized the marriage of boys over 14 and girls over 12 (Arriaga, 1938).

Data on family composition and fertility
163 were obtained by interviews with 58 families
842 where the wife was 47 years of age or older and had not borne children recently (table 13).

[text continues on p. 947]

I: Beals E-5 (1940-1941) 1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans
163
842
165

TABLE 13.—*Fertility of Cherán women*[1]

Number of births per woman	Number of women	Living children per woman	Number of women	Deceased children per woman	Number of women	Male births per woman	Number of women	Female births per woman	Number of women	Male children living per woman	Number of women	Female children living	Number of women
1	1	0	2	0	4	1	6	1	13	1	17	1	15
2	8	1	15	1	16	2	20	2	17	2	15	2	12
3	9	2	16	2	12	3	10	3	8	3	8	3	10
4	9	3	8	3	9	4	6	4	2	4	1	4	3
5	10	4	3	4	5	5	6	5	2	5	1	.....	.....
6	10	5	2	5	3	6	1	6	0	.....	.....	.....	.....
7	4	6	0	6	2	7	4	7	0	.....	.....	.....	.....
8	3	7	1	7	1	8	0	8	0	.....	.....	.....	.....
9	4	.....	.....	8	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
10	0	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
11	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
(Average) 5.2 per woman		(Average) 2.7 per woman		.....		.....		.....		.....		.....	

[1] Based on interviews with 83 women past child-bearing age. In the data on male and female births, the sex of 2 children was not remembered.

TABLE 14.—*Deaths by age groups in 1936, 1938, 1939, and 1940*
MONTHLY DEATH RATE

Age in years	1936												1938												1939												1940								Totals				
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	1936	1938	1939	1940	Total
Under 1 year	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	18	22	25	4	69
1– 9		1	1	1	1	1	2	1			1	0	1	1	1	1	1		1				1	0	1	1	1	1		1			1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	7	1	20
10–19		1			1	1	1			1	1	0		1										0												0								2	1	0	0	3
20–29		1		1	1	2	1				1	0		2	1									0		1										0								3	4	1	0	8
30–39				1		1						0		1										0												0								1	1	0	0	2
40–49									1	1	1	0												0												0								3	0	0	0	3
50–59											1	0												0												0								1	0	0	0	1
60–69	1	1	1	2								0	1		1									0												0								5	1	0	0	6
70–79									1			0		1										0												0								1	1	0	0	2
80–89												0												0												0								0	0	0	0	0
90+			1				1					0												0												0								2	0	0	0	2
Total	3	6	6	6	5	7	5	2	3	4	4	0	3	6	6	3	3	2	5	3	4	0	2	0	6	5	4	4	1	3	2	3	3	2	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	40	40	49	9	138

TABLE 15.—*Deaths according to sex in 1936, 1938, 1939, and part of 1940*
MONTHLY DEATH RATE

Sex	1936												1938												1939												1940								Totals				
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	1936	1938	1939	1940	Total
Male	1	2	3	3	3	4	3	2	2	3	3	0	3	4	3	2	1	1	3	2	3	0	1	0	3	3	2	3	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	25	25	28	5	83
Female	2	4	3	3	2	3	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	3	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	15	15	21	4	55
Total	3	6	6	6	5	7	5	2	3	4	4	0	3	6	6	3	3	2	5	3	4	0	2	0	6	5	4	4	1	3	2	3	3	2	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	40	40	49	9	138

163 The data again are not entirely reliable because
842 of a tendency not to count deceased children until urged. Almost always emotion was manifested upon recalling a specific child. Women were more commonly able to supply the names of deceased children. It is the impression of the interviewers that the data presented are fairly accurate for all children baptised but that stillbirths and perhaps death before baptism were not counted.[28]

Although most Cherán informants believed families were small through the small number of childbirths, the data indicate an average of 5.2 births per woman. No case of a childless woman was encountered in interviewing, although some exist in Cherán. If the failure to report stillbirths is taken into account, it is probable that Cherán women would rank fairly high in fertility. The small family size consequently is due to deaths rather than to lack of births. Data from the same families indicated only 2.7 children living at the time the data were collected, indicating nearly half of all children born had already died. The data are summarized in table 13.

165 Data on deaths for the years 1936, 1938, 1939, and part of 1940 are given in tables 14, 15, and 16. As might be expected, the highest death rate is in children under 1 year of age (probably higher than shown when unrecorded stillbirths are taken into account). The second highest rate is in the period from 1 to 9 years of age. For adults, the periods from 30 to 39 years and 60 to 69 years appear to be the most critical. Again, however, ages are only estimates and must not be considered as accurate.

165 The table of deaths by causes (table 16)
753 should be considered primarily of interest in showing the disease concepts prevalent in Cherán. There were no doctors in Cherán at the time these data were collected. Generally, the cause of death was provided by the relative registering the death, at the insistence of the Secretary that he had to put down something for his records to the State authorities.
[164] Epidemics of whooping cough and smallpox are clearly recorded, however.

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[858] [28] In taking a house census at Sevina, a neighboring town, the interviewers called attention to the fact that a babe in arms had not been included in the household total. Said the grandfather: "That one is too new. One hardly knows yet whether it lives or dies, so we do not count it."

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p.1636] Sierra Tarascans

789 The crosses put on top of houses are to
821 protect them from lightning or whirlwinds.

If people swim in Las Pilas, a small pond
481 northeast of town, they will sink after swim-
823 ming out a certain distance. Horses will drown there also.

821 Eclipses are thought the work of some higher power and that nothing can be done about them. There is no fear of eclipses, though, except in connection with childbirth. Some believe eclipses result from struggles between sun, moon, and earth. The defeated element is said to devour part of the foetus, causing adhesions between various parts and the womb and making birth difficult. No beliefs could be discovered about the stars. Indeed, informants insisted that there were no names for the stars and that people did not distinguish one from the other. This is unusual if true.

Mention should be made here of beliefs in the evil eye and in *los aires*, "the airs or winds." They will be discussed in connection with disease concepts and curing.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE CULTURE

128 and childhood and in the part of women. These lacks are inevitable, not only from the shortness of the study, but from the special attitudes in Cherán which closed so many avenues of approach to male investigators. Material collected by Rendón is very helpful, but it is fragmentary and insufficient. It does show, though, that women investigators could secure many data otherwise difficult to collect.

BIRTH

842 Children are generally desired in Cherán, and motherhood is regarded as normal and expectable. There is a clear idea of the physiological causation of pregnancy, and normally no means are taken to avoid it. Men are said to prefer boys and women to prefer girls, but whatever the sex, both parents usually welcome the child and wish many, and childbirth appears to cause minimal emotional disturbances, although they are not lacking. Although no accurate data were available, informants did not believe there were more than six or eight women in Cherán who had not borne children. Some said that

842 no remedies are taken for barrenness. Others reported that women speak to the professional midwives, who give them herbal remedies, [278] anoint the abdomen with mountain lion grease, or give stew made of mountain lion meat. However, none of the midwives reported any such practices.

847 Despite these attitudes, belief exists that pregnancy can be prevented or abortion caused. It is believed by some that only families of poor economic standing who already have two to four children attempt to use these methods. Others suggest absence of love in the home as a reason; some women carrying on illicit affairs are believed to practice abortion. A good many people seem to know of the existence of abortion and to have knowledge of the herbs used. Consequently attempted abortion probably is more frequent than people wish to admit. The [842] ideal of Cherán is the large family; people prefer not to talk about those who do not share the ideal and some refuse to talk about it. It is also said that the municipal officials are vigilant in punishing such cases, but as the penalty is [684] said to be a fine of $1.00 or $1.50 or a night in jail after recovery, this probably would not be a great deterrent even if the danger of detection were great.

847 Four plants are named as being taken to cause abortion. One, *artamisa*, taken with 278 plenty of salt, was mentioned by one of the midwives. Another admitted to using iris root for this purpose, although generally the midwives claim to be opposed to abortion. The two plants most used, however, are *ruda* and *gobernadorcillo*, KUASA. It is possible that these are the same plants; at least descriptions of their use appear to be the same. If they are effective (and local medical men are sharply contradictory in their opinions), many unintentional abortions are probably caused, for *ruda* is a regular remedy for stomach pains. It is not taken, except intentionally, when pregnancy has occurred, as the herb is widely known as producing abortion. The herb is also believed to be helpful to women who have been unable to have children.

Much the same accounts were given of [842] *gobernadorcillo*. To have children, the herb is cooked with a tablet of chocolate and taken just before the menstrual period is expected.

847 278 [844] To cause abortion, the root is mashed to obtain the juice. The latter is strained and taken mixed in a liter of water. *Gobernadorcillo* is also taken to accelerate the birth if it should be slow.

● 842 278 One midwife purges barren women with the bulb of the white lily. Two or three bulbs are used; they are cooked and strained, and the juice given. Three days after the purge, the patient is bathed and "given a sweat" with cooking oil and ground salt rubbed all over the body. This cure is given during the time of menstruation to "clear" the blood. This cures the "coldnesses" of the patient or causes the harmful elements to be discharged. One patient now has four children. Another, barren 10 years before treatment, now has two children.

847 Involuntary abortions also occur. Pregnant mothers are often fearful of this and sometimes will not go to curers when they are ill for fear they will be given a medicine which will cause abortion. A woman in her eighth month of pregnancy who was suffering fever and spitting blood refused to go to the curer for fear of being given abortive drugs. Drinking is believed to cause many abortions, and heavy work, such as lifting a log while helping to build a fence, is recognized as a possible cause of abortion. If the mother "likes something too much," for example, a horse or a kind of food, the child may be born prematurely, but apparently may live. Solar eclipses are likewise [821] believed to cause early births. The midwife is sometimes called if abortion is feared. One midwife anoints the coccyx and abdomen with the white of an egg (which has been beaten on the ground) and also with lard and oil. Another midwife gives the flower of maize, tomato peel, a shoot of verbena, and a potsherd of Guadalajara ware. The potsherd is ground and the whole made into an infusion. This is taken twice and the coccyx and abdomen are rubbed with the white of an egg beaten on the ground.

843 Some people believe that the first child takes 9 months to mature, while the subsequent children take only 8 months. While women do not keep exact count of the period between menstruations, they have a pretty accurate idea of the proper interval, and pregnancy is recognized when menstruation fails to occur. Lassitude, heaviness, and loss of appetite are con-

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 MU34 Tarasco MU34
Sierra Tarascans

845 Wrong positions, especially breech presentations, may result from several causes. The mother may have moved around too much and worked too hard, hit a dog with her foot, put the "foot" of a stick of wood in the fire first, failed to remove the *comal* from the fire immediately after finishing the cooking of tortillas, eaten toasted tortillas, or eaten off the metate (the latter taboo was explained on the basis that the metate has only three legs). Children are born blind only because "God wills it."

Witches may interfere with pregnancy and make the child arrive dead. The preventive [789] remedy is to cook tomato peeling and a potsherd of Guadalajara ware together and drink the liquid.

843 Fathers are also under some restrictions during the period of pregnancy. Whenever a load of wood is brought to the house it must be untied immediately or the child may be strangled by the umbilical cord. Also, the father must not kill lizards or snakes during the pregnancy, or touch resin or turpentine, or they will enter into the child. Some say the father should not kill any kind of an animal, from a snail to an ox. If he does so, the animal will enter into the child through the mouth or nose and the child will be born dead. One midwife thought the father should not have relations with his wife after the third or fourth month of pregnancy for reasons of cleanliness, but some say difficult birth or wrong positions may result from continued intercourse. The father should not work on the day of birth.

844 No distinction is made between first and subsequent births. Midwives varied in their ideas as to the frequency of births. Some believed that women had children from 1 to 1½ years [842] apart, others said from 8 months to 3 years. One midwife explained that the number of children and the frequency of births were determined by something resembling links in the uterus. These could be counted by the midwife, who could tell how many children the woman would have and, by the spacing, what the interval between births would be. Some women might be capable of as many as 25 pregnancies.

All births are attended by midwives, who form a professional group, although without